

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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Commissioner for Patents
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APPEAL BRIEF

Dear Sir:

The following Appeal Brief is submitted pursuant to the Notice of Appeal dated August 2, 2006 for consideration by the Board of Appeals and Interferences. 37 C.F.R. § 41.37.

(i) REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is NetZero, Inc.

(ii) RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no applications currently being appealed that may directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

(iii) STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-30 and 41 are pending, have been rejected and are now being appealed. Claims 31-40 have been canceled.

Claims 1-30, 40 and 41 were pending and rejected in the Final Office Action dated June 19, 2006. Claim 12 was amended on July 25, 2006. In the Advisory Action of August 10, 2006, the amendment of claim 12 was entered for purpose of this appeal. Claim 40 was canceled in an amendment pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 41.33(b)(1) on September 27, 2006.

(iv) STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

An amendment amending claim 12 was filed on July 25, 2006. In the Advisory Action of August 10, 2006, the amendment of claim 12 was entered for purpose of this appeal.

Claim 40 was canceled in an amendment pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 41.33(b)(1) on September 27, 2006.

(v) SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

Independent Claim 1:

A method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation, the method comprising the steps of (p. 10, ll. 15-17): providing a content delivery system for customer support (p. 7, ll. 17-20; p. 8, ll. 13-14; FIG. 1, 110); storing plural items of content, wherein the plural items of content are technical support information (p. 7, ll. 10-13; p. 9, ll. 5-7; p. 11, l. 2; FIG. 2, 210); storing respective descriptions of the items of content and respective order codes for the items of content (p. 9, ll. 5-6, p. 11, ll. 2-5; FIG. 2, 215 and 220); receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated (p. 9, ll. 7-10; p. 10, ll. 15-17; p. 11, ll. 6-9; FIG. 2, 230, 235); assigning a tracking code for the inquiry-response transaction (p. 9, ll. 5-9; p. 11, ll. 13-14; FIG. 2, 240); responding via e-mail to the first e-mail message with a prompt message, the prompt e-mail message including an arrangement of descriptions and order codes for a plurality of the items of content, the tracking code, and instructions to the user for ordering the items of content (p. 12, ll. 1-7; FIG. 2, 250); receiving a

second message via e-mail from the user (p. 12, ll. 17-21; FIG. 2, 255); parsing the second e-mail message and identifying the tracking code in the second e-mail message (p. 13, ll. 1-3; FIG. 2, 255, 260); parsing the second e-mail message for at least one of the order codes specified by the user (p. 13, ll. 10-11; FIG. 2, 265); extracting the items of content identified by the order codes in the second e-mail message (p. 13, ll. 11-13; FIG. 2, 270); packaging the items of content from the extracting step into a single package unit (p. 14, ll. 8-14); responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a response e-mail message comprising the single package unit comprising the items of content corresponding to the order codes in the second e-mail message (p. 14, ll. 5-8; FIG. 2, 285).

Independent Claim 13:

An automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations, the automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system comprising (p. 10, ll. 15-17; p. 11, ll. 1-2): providing a content delivery system for customer support (p. 7, ll. 17-20; p. 8, ll. 13-14; FIG. 1, 110); a first database storing respective descriptions of the items of content, a second database storing respective order codes for the items of content (p. 9, ll. 5-6; p. 11, ll. 2-5; FIG. 2, 215 and 220); [*MEANS PLUS FUNCTION*] means for receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated (*STRUCTURE/ACTS*: p. 9, ll. 7-10; p. 10, ll. 15-17; p. 11, ll. 6-9; FIG. 2, 230, 235); [*MEANS PLUS FUNCTION*] means for assigning a tracking code for the inquiry-response transaction (*STRUCTURE/ACTS*: p. 9, ll. 5-9; p. 11, ll. 13-14; FIG. 2, 240); [*MEANS PLUS FUNCTION*] means for responding via e-mail to the first e-mail message with a prompt message, the prompt e-mail message including an arrangement of descriptions and order codes for a plurality of the items of content, the tracking code, and instructions to the user for ordering the items of content, wherein the items of content are technical support information (*STRUCTURE/ACTS*: p. 7, ll. 10-13; p. 12, ll. 1-7; FIG. 2, 250); [*MEANS PLUS FUNCTION*] means for receiving a second message via e-mail from the user (*STRUCTURE/ACTS*: p. 12, ll. 17-21; FIG. 2, 255); [*MEANS PLUS FUNCTION*] means for parsing the second e-mail message and identifying the tracking code in the second e-mail message (*STRUCTURE/ACTS*:

p. 13, ll. 1-3; FIG. 2, 255, 260); [*MEANS PLUS FUNCTION*] means for parsing the second e-mail message for at least one of the order codes specified by the user (*STRUCTURE / ACTS*: p. 13, ll. 10-11; FIG. 2, 265); [*MEANS PLUS FUNCTION*] means for extracting the items of content identified by the order codes in the second e-mail message (*STRUCTURE / ACTS*: p. 13, ll. 11-13; FIG. 2, 270); [*MEANS PLUS FUNCTION*] means for packaging the items of content from the extracting step into a single package unit (*STRUCTURE / ACTS*: p. 14, ll. 8-14); [*MEANS PLUS FUNCTION*] means for responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a response e-mail message comprising the single package unit comprising the items of content corresponding to the order codes in the second e-mail message (*STRUCTURE / ACTS*: p. 14, ll. 5-8; FIG. 2, 285).

Independent Claim 22:

An automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations, the automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system comprising (p. 10, ll. 15-17; p. 11, ll. 1-2); providing a content delivery system for customer support (p. 7, ll. 17-20; p. 8, ll. 13-14; FIG. 1, 110); a first database storing respective descriptions of the items of content, a second database storing respective order codes for the items of content (p. 9, ll. 5-6; p. 11, ll. 2-5; FIG. 2, 215 and 220); a server comprising a general purpose computer having machine readable computer programs for (p. 9, ll. 1-4): receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated (p. 9, ll. 7-10; p. 10, ll. 15-17; p. 11, ll. 6-9; FIG. 2, 230, 235); assigning a tracking code for the inquiry-response transaction (p. 9, ll. 5-9; p. 11, ll. 13-14; FIG. 2, 240); responding via e-mail to the first e-mail message with a prompt message, the prompt e-mail message including an arrangement of descriptions and order codes for a plurality of the items of content, the tracking code, and instructions to the user for ordering the items of content, wherein the items of content are technical support information (p. 7, ll. 10-13; p. 12, ll. 1-7; FIG. 2, 250); receiving a second message via e-mail from the user (p. 12, ll. 17-21; FIG. 2, 255); parsing the second e-mail message and identifying the tracking code in the second e-mail message (p. 13, ll. 1-3; FIG. 2, 255, 260); parsing the second e-mail message for at least one of the order codes specified

by the user (p. 13, ll. 10-11; FIG. 2, 265); extracting the items of content identified by the order codes in the second e-mail message (p. 13, ll. 11-13; FIG. 2, 270); packaging the items of content from the extracting step into a single package unit (p. 14, ll. 8-14); responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a response e-mail message comprising the single package unit comprising the items of content corresponding to the order codes in the second e-mail message (p. 14, ll. 5-8; FIG. 2, 285).

Independent Claim 41:

A method of delivering items of content to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation, wherein the items of content are stored in a repository (p. 10, ll. 15-17; p. 11, ll. 1-2), and there are also stored respective descriptions of the items of content and respective order codes for the items of content (p. 9, ll. 5-6; p. 11, ll. 2-5; FIG. 2, 215 and 220), the method comprising the steps of: providing a content delivery system for customer support (p. 7, ll. 17-20; p. 8, ll. 13-14; FIG. 1, 110); receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated (p. 9, ll. 7-10; p. 10, ll. 15-17; p. 11, ll. 6-9; FIG. 2, 230, 235); responding via e-mail to the first e-mail message with a prompt message, the prompt e-mail message including an arrangement of descriptions and order codes for a plurality of the items of content, and instructions to the user for ordering the items of content, wherein the items of content are technical support information (p. 7, ll. 10-13; p. 12, ll. 1-7; FIG. 2, 250); receiving a second message via e-mail from the user (p. 12, ll. 17-21; FIG. 2, 255); parsing the second e-mail message and determining that the second e-mail message is part of the same transaction as the first e-mail message and the prompt e-mail message (p. 13, ll. 1-7; FIG. 2, 255, 260); parsing the second e-mail message for at least one of the order codes specified by the user (p. 13, ll. 10-11; FIG. 2, 265); extracting the items of content identified by the order codes in the second e-mail message (p. 13, ll. 11-13; FIG. 2, 270); packaging the items of content from the extracting step into a single package unit (p. 14, ll. 8-14); responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a response e-mail message comprising the single package unit comprising the items of content corresponding to the order codes in the second e-mail message (p. 14, ll. 5-8; FIG. 2, 285).

(vi) GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Claims 1-2, 4-6, 13-14, 22-23, 25-27 and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Gifford (USP 5,724,424) and further in view of Talati et al. (USP 5,903,878).

Claims 3, 15 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Gifford (USP 5,724,424), further in view of Talati et al. (USP 5,903,878) and further in view of Applicant Admitted Prior Art at the Specification paragraph [0004].

Claims 7, 19 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Gifford (USP 5,724,424), further in view of Talati et al. (USP 5,903,878) and further in view of Joseph (US Pat. Publ. 2003/0028448).

Claims 8-12, 20-21 and 29-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Gifford (USP 5,724,424), further in view of Talati et al. (USP 5,903,878) and further in view of Schuster et al. (USP 6,351,524).

(vii) ARGUMENT

Claims 1-2, 4-6, 13-14, 16-18, 22-23, 25-27 and 41 are patentable over Gifford in view of Talati:

“To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, [. . .] the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations.” *MPEP 706.02(j)*.

Claims 1, 13, 22 and 41 are independent. Claim 1 recites, among other features, “receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated.” The Examiner asserted that this feature is taught at Gifford, 7:9-10 and Fig. 6, items 19-20.

Gifford’s process requires that a buyer activate a link resulting in an HTTP request for a specific document with a specified URL (see Gifford, 5:50-53). Gifford’s merchant computer then

retrieves the document associated with the given URL and returns it to the buyer (see Gifford, 5:54-55). Gifford expressly states, “when the user activates link 5, an HTTP request 25 is sent to the merchant computer requesting the document” (see Gifford, 5:57-59). This is the only embodiment in which Gifford discloses, teaches or suggests initiating a transaction.

In fact, a thorough review of Gifford shows that Gifford does not disclose, teach or suggest initiation of a transaction via e-mail. Gifford, at 7:3-10, discloses that a message may be sent to the shipping system to execute the order. The “network sales system implementing an electronic mail order system” is a system residing at the merchant computer which releases an order to be delivered via the USPS or an electronic delivery. Gifford’s teaching is clear: Gifford’s transaction is initiated via a buyer clicking on a hyperlink. Gifford does not disclose, teach or suggest the feature, “receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated.” Moreover, nothing in Talati overcomes Gifford’s shortcoming.

The Examiner further asserted that “the term e-mail while common in usage does not have a particularly specific ordinary definition” but provided one example of a definition for “e-mail” based on the Oxford Online dictionary as “*noun* the sending of messages by electronic means from one computer user to one or more recipients via a network; *verb* mail or send using email.” In contrast to the Examiner’s assertion, the term e-mail does have a specific meaning to one of ordinary skill in the art with regard to general purpose computer devices and computer software. Microsoft Press, a division of Microsoft Corporation, the preeminent software business for the past two decades, publishes the Microsoft Computer Dictionary. Per Microsoft’s Introduction (at page vii), the *Microsoft Computer Dictionary, Fifth Edition* is

designed to be a comprehensive and authoritative source of definitions for computer-related terms and abbreviations. The [Microsoft Computer] dictionary includes terms drawn from a wide variety of topics relevant to computer users, including software, hardware, networking, data storage, graphics, games, information processing, the Internet and the World Wide Web, gaming, history, jargon and slang, organizations, programming and standards.

The term “e-mail”, on page 190 of the *Microsoft Computer Dictionary, Fifth Edition*, is expressly defined as: “*n.* **1.** Short for electronic **mail**. The exchange of text messages and computer files over a communications network, such as a local area network or the Internet, usually between computers or terminal. **2.** An electronic text message.”

Notably, the term “hyperlink”, on page 260-261 of the *Microsoft Computer Dictionary, Fifth Edition*, is expressly defined as:

n. A connection between an element in a hypertext document, such as a word, a phrase, a symbol, or an image, and a different element in the document, another document, a file, or a script. The user activates the link by clicking on the linked element, which is usually underlined or in a color different from the rest of the document to indicate that the element is linked. Hyperlinks are indicated in a hypertext document through tags in markup languages such as SGML and HTML. These tags are generally not visible to the user.

A person having ordinary skill in the art of general purpose computer devices and computer software would necessarily construe the term hyperlink entirely incongruent to the term e-mail. Because activating a hyperlink does not teach or suggest initiating an inquiry-response transaction in response to receiving an e-mail, claim 1 is not obvious from Gifford in view of Talati.

Independent claims 13, 22 and 41 each include a similar feature and are thereby patentable over Gifford in view of Talati. By virtue of their dependence from claim 1, claims 2 and 4-6 are patentable over Gifford in view of Talati. By virtue of their dependence from claim 13, claims 14 and 16-18 are patentable over Gifford in view of Talati. By virtue of their dependence from claim 22, claims 23 and 25-27 are patentable over Gifford in view of Talati. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be overturn.

Claims 3, 15 and 24 are patentable over Gifford, in view of Talati, and further in view of the Specification at paragraph [0004]:

By virtue of their respective dependence from claims 2, 14 and 23, claims 3, 15 and 24 are patentable over Gifford in view of Talati. Moreover, nothing in the Specification at paragraph [0004] discloses, teaches or suggests that “receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated” was prior art. Therefore, claims 3, 15 and 24 are patentable over Gifford in view of Talati and further in view of the Specification at paragraph [0004]. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be overturned.

Claims 7, 19 and 28 are patentable over Gifford, in view of Talati, and further in view of Joseph:

By virtue of their respective dependence from claims 1, 13 and 22, claims 7, 19 and 28 are patentable in view of Gifford and further in view of Talati. Nothing in Joseph discloses, teaches or suggests “receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated.” Therefore, claims 7, 19 and 28 are patentable in view of Gifford, further in view of Talati and further in view of Joseph. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be overturned.

Claims 8-12, 20-21 and 29-30 are patentable over Gifford, in view of Talati, and further in view of Schuster:

By virtue of their respective ultimate dependence from claims 1, 13 and 22, claims 8-12, 20-21 and 29-30 are patentable over Gifford in view of Talati. Nothing in Schuster discloses, teaches or suggests “receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated.” Therefore, claims 8-12, 20-21 and 29-30 are patentable over Gifford in view of Talati and further in view of Schuster. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be overturned.

CONCLUSION AND RELIEF

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all claims patentably define the subject invention over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The undersigned respectfully requests that the Board overturn the rejection of claims 1-30 and 41 and hold claims 1-30 and 41 allowable.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: September 28, 2006

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel G. Landau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joel" being more prominent.

Joel G. Landau, Reg. No. 54,732

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(viii) CLAIMS APPENDIX

The claims involved in this Appeal are as follows:

Claim 1: A method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation, the method comprising the steps of

- providing a content delivery system for customer support

- storing plural items of content, wherein the plural items of content are technical support information

- storing respective descriptions of the items of content and respective order codes for the items of content

- receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated

- assigning a tracking code for the inquiry-response transaction

- responding via e-mail to the first e-mail message with a prompt message, the prompt e-mail message including an arrangement of descriptions and order codes for a plurality of the items of content, the tracking code, and instructions to the user for ordering the items of content

- receiving a second message via e-mail from the user

- parsing the second e-mail message and identifying the tracking code in the second e-mail message

- parsing the second e-mail message for at least one of the order codes specified by the user

- extracting the items of content identified by the order codes in the second e-mail message

- packaging the items of content from the extracting step into a single package unit

- responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a response e-mail message comprising the single package unit comprising the items of content corresponding to the order codes in the second e-mail message.

Claim 2: The method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation of claim 1, further comprising, after the step of parsing the second e-mail message for at least one of the order codes, if the second e-mail message does not have at least one order code specified by the user, then responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a simpler prompt message, the simpler prompt e-mail message including the arrangement of descriptions and order codes for a plurality of the items of content, the tracking code, and simpler instructions to the user for ordering the items of content.

Claim 3: The method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation of claim 2, further comprising
receiving a third message via e-mail from the user
parsing the third e-mail message and identifying the tracking code in the third e-mail message
parsing the third e-mail message for at least one of the order codes specified by the user
if the third e-mail message does not have at least one order code specified by the user, then referring the third e-mail message to a human specialist at a client device
if the third e-mail message has at least one order code specified by the user, then
extracting the items of content identified by the order codes in the second e-mail message
packaging the items of content from the extracting step into a single package unit
responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a response e-mail message comprising the single package unit comprising the items of content corresponding to the order codes in the second e-mail message.

Claim 4: The method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation of claim 1, wherein the response e-mail message includes the tracking code.

Claim 5: The method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation of claim 1, the step of receiving

the first e-mail message further comprising storing the first e-mail message.

Claim 6: The method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation of claim 1, the step of receiving the second e-mail message further comprising storing the second e-mail message.

Claim 7: The method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation of claim 1, wherein
the items of content comprise technical support documents
the descriptions of the items of content comprise common technical support questions which are answered by the respective technical support documents.

Claim 8: The method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation of claim 1, the method further comprising
after receiving the first e-mail message, assigning a first one of plural status codes signifying varying states of e-mail based inquiry-response transactions, the first status code to indicative that the first e-mail message has been received

after receiving the second e-mail message, assigning a second one of the status codes to the inquiry-response transaction to thereby indicate that the second e-mail message has been received.

Claim 9: The method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation of claim 8, the method further comprising

after responding with the prompt message, assigning a third one of the status codes to the inquiry-response transaction to thereby indicate that the prompt e-mail message has been sent

after responding with the response e-mail message, assigning a fourth one of the status codes to the inquiry-response transaction to thereby indicate that the response e-mail message has been sent.

Claim 10: The method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation of claim 1, the method further comprising restricting and restraining access by the users to the items of content in accordance with specified criteria.

Claim 11: The method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation of claim 10, the restricting step including determining whether delivering items of content to the given user's client device is permitted, wherein if delivering information to the given user's client device is not permitted, then the selected items of content will not be delivered.

Claim 12: The method of delivering items of content from a storage location to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation of claim 10, the restricting step including determining whether delivering items of content to the given user is permitted, wherein if delivering information to the given user is not permitted, then the selected items of content will not be delivered.

Claim 13: An automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations, the automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system comprising

- providing a content delivery system for customer support
- a first database storing respective descriptions of the items of content
- a second database storing respective order codes for the items of content
- means for receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated
- means for assigning a tracking code for the inquiry-response transaction
- means for responding via e-mail to the first e-mail message with a prompt message, the prompt e-mail message including an arrangement of descriptions and order codes for a plurality of the items of content, the tracking code, and instructions to the user for ordering the items of content,

wherein the items of content are technical support information

means for receiving a second message via e-mail from the user

means for parsing the second e-mail message and identifying the tracking code in the second e-mail message

means for parsing the second e-mail message for at least one of the order codes specified by the user

means for extracting the items of content identified by the order codes in the second e-mail message

means for packaging the items of content from the extracting step into a single package unit

means for responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a response e-mail message comprising the single package unit comprising the items of content corresponding to the order codes in the second e-mail message.

Claim 14: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 13, further comprising means for detecting if the second e-mail message has at least one order code specified by the user, and if not then responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a simpler prompt message, the simpler prompt e-mail message including the arrangement of descriptions and order codes for a plurality of the items of content, the tracking code, and simpler instructions to the user for ordering the items of content.

Claim 15: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 14, further comprising

means for receiving a third message via e-mail from the user

means for parsing the third e-mail message and identifying the tracking code in the third e-mail message

means for parsing the third e-mail message for at least one of the order codes specified by the user

means for detecting if the third e-mail message has at least one order code specified by the user, and if not then referring the third e-mail message to a human specialist at a client device

means for detecting if the third e-mail message has at least one order code specified by the user, and if so then

extracting the items of content identified by the order codes in the second e-mail message

packaging the items of content from the extracting step into a single package unit

responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a response e-mail message comprising the single package unit comprising the items of content corresponding to the order codes in the second e-mail message.

Claim 16: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 13, wherein the response e-mail message includes the tracking code.

Claim 17: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 13, the means for receiving the first e-mail message further comprising means for storing the first e-mail message.

Claim 18: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 13, the means for receiving the second e-mail message further comprising means for storing the second e-mail message.

Claim 19: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 13, wherein

the items of content comprise technical support documents

the descriptions of the items of content comprise common technical support questions which are answered by the respective technical support documents.

Claim 20: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 13, the method further comprising

means for, after receiving the first e-mail message, assigning a first one of plural status codes signifying varying states of e-mail based inquiry-response transactions, the first status code to indicative that the first e-mail message has been received

means for, after receiving the second e-mail message, assigning a second one of the status codes to the inquiry-response transaction to thereby indicate that the second e-mail message has been received.

Claim 21: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 20, the method further comprising

means for, after responding with the prompt message, assigning a third one of the status codes to the inquiry-response transaction to thereby indicate that the prompt e-mail message has been sent

means for, after responding with the response e-mail message, assigning a fourth one of the status codes to the inquiry-response transaction to thereby indicate that the response e-mail message has been sent.

Claim 22: An automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations, the automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system comprising

providing a content delivery system for customer support
a first database storing respective descriptions of the items of content
a second database storing respective order codes for the items of content
a server comprising a general purpose computer having machine readable computer programs
for

receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote

location, whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated

assigning a tracking code for the inquiry-response transaction

responding via e-mail to the first e-mail message with a prompt message, the prompt e-mail message including an arrangement of descriptions and order codes for a plurality of the items of content, the tracking code, and instructions to the user for ordering the items of content, wherein the items of content are technical support information

receiving a second message via e-mail from the user

parsing the second e-mail message and identifying the tracking code in the second e-mail message

parsing the second e-mail message for at least one of the order codes specified by the user

extracting the items of content identified by the order codes in the second e-mail message

packaging the items of content from the extracting step into a single package unit

responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a response e-mail message comprising the single package unit comprising the items of content corresponding to the order codes in the second e-mail message.

Claim 23: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 22, machine readable computer programs further for detecting if the second e-mail message has at least one order code specified by the user, and if not then responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a simpler prompt message, the simpler prompt e-mail message including the arrangement of descriptions and order codes for a plurality of the items of content, the tracking code, and simpler instructions to the user for ordering the items of content.

Claim 24: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 23, the machine readable computer programs further for

receiving a third message via e-mail from the user
parsing the third e-mail message and identifying the tracking code in the third e-mail message
parsing the third e-mail message for at least one of the order codes specified by the user
detecting if the third e-mail message has at least one order code specified by the user, and if
not then referring the third e-mail message to a human specialist at a client device
detecting if the third e-mail message has at least one order code specified by the user, and if
so then
extracting the items of content identified by the order codes in the second e-mail
message
packaging the items of content from the extracting step into a single package unit
responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a response e-mail message
comprising the single package unit comprising the items of content corresponding to the order codes
in the second e-mail message.

Claim 25: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 22, wherein the response e-mail message includes the tracking code.

Claim 26: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 22, the machine readable computer programs for receiving the first e-mail message further comprising machine readable computer programs for storing the first e-mail message.

Claim 27: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 22, the machine readable computer programs for receiving the second e-mail message further comprising machine readable computer programs for storing the second e-mail message.

Claim 28: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-

response automation of claim 22, wherein

the items of content comprise technical support documents

the descriptions of the items of content comprise common technical support questions which are answered by the respective technical support documents.

Claim 29: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 22, the machine readable computer programs further for

after receiving the first e-mail message, assigning a first one of plural status codes signifying varying states of e-mail based inquiry-response transactions, the first status code to indicative that the first e-mail message has been received

after receiving the second e-mail message, assigning a second one of the status codes to the inquiry-response transaction to thereby indicate that the second e-mail message has been received.

Claim 30: The automated inquiry-response e-mail based content delivery system for delivering items of content from a repository to client devices at remote locations of claim 22, the machine readable computer programs further for

after responding with the prompt message, assigning a third one of the status codes to the inquiry-response transaction to thereby indicate that the prompt e-mail message has been sent

after responding with the response e-mail message, assigning a fourth one of the status codes to the inquiry-response transaction to thereby indicate that the response e-mail message has been sent.

Claim 41: A method of delivering items of content to client devices at remote locations through e-mail based inquiry-response automation, wherein the items of content are stored in a repository, and there are also stored respective descriptions of the items of content and respective order codes for the items of content, the method comprising the steps of

providing a content delivery system for customer support

receiving a first message via e-mail from a user of a given client device at a remote location,

whereby an inquiry-response transaction is initiated

responding via e-mail to the first e-mail message with a prompt message, the prompt e-mail message including an arrangement of descriptions and order codes for a plurality of the items of content, and instructions to the user for ordering the items of content, wherein the items of content are technical support information

receiving a second message via e-mail from the user

parsing the second e-mail message and determining that the second e-mail message is part of the same transaction as the first e-mail message and the prompt e-mail message

parsing the second e-mail message for at least one of the order codes specified by the user

extracting the items of content identified by the order codes in the second e-mail message

packaging the items of content from the extracting step into a single package unit

responding via e-mail to the second e-mail message with a response e-mail message comprising the single package unit comprising the items of content corresponding to the order codes in the second e-mail message.

(ix) EVIDENCE APPENDIX

No evidence has been submitted pursuant to §§ 1.130, 1.131, or 1.132 of this title. No other evidence has been entered by the examiner and relied upon by appellant in the appeal.

(x) RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

Since there are no applications currently being appealed that may directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal, there are no copies of decisions rendered by a court or the Board.